Thin Strip Rip Device

by Mike Schwing

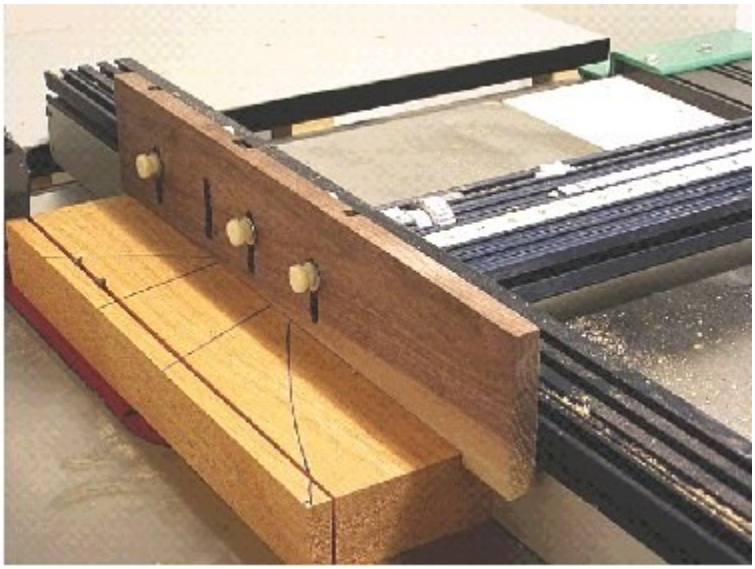
While working with thick expensive hardwoods, sometimes the workpieces get too thin for me to comfortably move them with my hands. There are all sorts of devices on the market to help with this. I have most of them! None really worked for me well enough for this specific task, but the simple thing described here does.

The Gripper® is great. I use it all of the time. But I can't seem to always keep the workpiece perfectly against the fence with the Gripper®, and featherboards aren't always possible to use with some of the projects I undertake.

My vertical featherboards help keep the work in its place on the surface of the saw, but when the work gets skinny they get in the way of my hands. I really don't want to cut my fingers off.

So I improvised. I made a pushstick that is guided by the fence and retained by the same runners that I use for the vertical featherboards (it is a little easier with my Sawtrain fence as it has a built in dovetail slide for this sort of purpose, but it should adapt well to other fences, too). A little "plastidip" spray on the underside of the pushstick provides great gripping power, and I now have the ability to move the work along the fence without my hands getting anywhere near the blade. A future improvement will include a handle to the right side, making it even safer.

This works fine for me. It may or not for you. Sure, there is plenty of room for improvement, but I thought it may help provide ideas/inspiration for others to make their tablesaw work a bit safer as well.



Here you can see how it works. It is lined up on a piece of mahogany that was getting a little too skinny for comfort. Blade guard removed for..... (yeah right)